Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

7 August 2018

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2018 Meeting
Geneva, 4-7 December 2018

Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X
Geneva, 7-8 August 2018
Item 7 of the provisional agenda
Development of guidelines and procedures for mobilizing resources, including financial resources on a voluntary basis to address gaps and needs

Comparative review of biological threats needs assessment and national action plans implemented under BTWC, EU CBRN Centres of Excellence, WHO (IHR-JEE), and 1540 UNSCR

African Regional Conference, 25-26 October 2017, Rabat, Morocco

Submitted by the European Union

I. Introduction

1. The European Union and its Member States are consistently supporting the concrete implementation of Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) through multiple and diverse assistance programmes and are willing to continue working on common understandings for effective action with regard to cooperation for peaceful purposes in the Convention's framework, especially by better identifying relevant needs and opportunities to match them with assistance offers. The efforts of the BTWC States Parties to enhance their national capacities with a view to improving biosafety, biosecurity and infectious disease control deserve particular attention against the backdrop of the Ebola crisis in West Africa.

2. In this context, the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence Initiative and the 2017 Italian Presidency of the G7 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction organised a Regional Conference in Africa to discuss countries' biosafety

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and biosecurity priorities in the context of the post-Ebola crisis. The Conference was held in Rabat, Morocco, on 25-26 October 2017. The Conference was attended by eleven African countries – Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo – as well as by members of the G7 Global Partnership and experts from relevant international organisations such as the BTWC Implementation Support Unit, WHO, and INTERPOL.

3. Comprehensive and in-depth discussions took place during the Conference resulting in a consensual agreement among the participating African countries on a detailed set of priorities and regional trends in a number of thematic areas of assistance listed in the table, which is annexed to this document.

4. The table reflects the inputs received from national experts, focusing on biosafety and biosecurity needs, as well as corresponding information collected from relevant needs assessments devised within assistance frameworks such as the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence National Action Plans, the UNSCR 1540 National Implementation Action Plans, the Joint External Evaluation under the International Health Regulations (WHO, 2005), and the BTWC Extended Implementation Assistance Programmes under the EU Council Decision 2016/51/CFSP.

5. National experts agreed on a set of coherent and comprehensive priorities to strengthen countries' preparedness against possible future epidemic outbreaks and to strategically channel capacity-building assistance across biosafety and biosecurity macro-areas, wherever possible with a regional approach considering the transboundary rationale of actions for infectious disease control.

6. In the light of this approach, the consensual set of priorities and regional trends was presented at the plenary session of the Global Partnership, held in Rome on 15-17 November 2017, with a view to contributing to the creation of positive synergies between the policy orientations for assistance of Global Partnership members and the needs of African countries.

7. Building upon such positive experience to plan tailored actions in order to increase infectious disease control, the EU and its Member States are of the opinion that further action should be considered within the BTWC framework on the enhancement of international cooperation and assistance with a view to further promoting national and regional capacity building initiatives in the fields of biosafety and biosecurity.

II. Annex

Table: National priorities & regional trends (Pilot African Regional Conference, Rabat, 25-26 October 2017)

Capacity domain	*Macro areas/priorities*	*Needs*	*Country and sources*[1]
	Political support	Political support for CBRN National Teams as a comprehensive source of expertise & inter-ministerial coordination & cooperation	All countries present at Pilot Regional Conference in Rabat, Oct 2017
		Improve coordination between International Organizations & the national authorities dealing with biomedical issues (Ministry of Health) & biosafety & biosecurity (typically Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	
	National legislation, regulations & policies	Establish national list of controlled biological agents & toxins, as well as corresponding regulations controlling access	Côte d'Ivoire (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017), DRC (NAP), Gabon (NAP), Mauritania (Rabat, Oct 2017)
PREVENTION		Develop/strengthen national biosafety & biosecurity legislation/regulations/policies	Cameroon (JEE); Côte d'Ivoire (JEE); Gabon (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (JEE); Liberia (JEE), Mauritania (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (JEE), Sierra Leone (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (Rabat, Oct 2017)
	Documenting & securing high-risk biological materials at the laboratory-level	Conduct national mapping of facilities handling high-risk biological materials	Côte d'Ivoire (NAP), DRC (NAP), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (JEE), Mauritania (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (NAP), Senegal (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017), Sierra Leone (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Establish & maintain national inventory of high-risk biological materials	Côte d'Ivoire (NAP), Gabon (NAP), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017),

[1] Abbreviations: EU CBRN CoE National Action Plan ('NAP'); Joint External Evaluation under the International Health Regulations, WHO, 2005 ('JEE'); 1540 National Implementation Action Plan ('1540'); Pilot African Regional Conference, Rabat, 25-26 October 2017 ('Rabat Oct 2017').

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Capacity domain	*Macro areas/priorities*	*Needs*	*Country and sources*[1]
			Senegal (1540; Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Establish & maintain national registry of users handling high-risk biological materials	Côte d'Ivoire (NAP), Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Strengthen security (infrastructure, equipment, information security) at facilities handling high-risk biological materials	Côte d'Ivoire (Rabat, Oct 2017), DRC (NAP), Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Mauritania (JEE), Morocco (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017) Senegal (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Sierra Leone, Togo (1540; Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Conduct (joint) inspections/audits of laboratories to monitor & enforce compliance with biosafety & biosecurity requirements	Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Mauritania (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017), Sierra Leone (Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (JEE)
		Strengthen inventory controls, including through improved documentation & inventory management software	Côte d'Ivoire (Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Mauritania (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017), Sierra Leone (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Move dangerous pathogens to minimum number of secure facilities or establish professionally managed & inventoried biobank	
		Improve traceability systems	Gabon (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017)
	Transport/shipment security for high-risk biological materials	Strengthen & harmonize collection, preparation & packaging, transport/shipment & storage of biological samples to enhance safety & security	Cameroon (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Côte d'Ivoire (NAP; JEE), DRC (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017), Gabon, (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017); Ghana (JEE), Liberia (JEE), Mauritania (JEE), Morocco (JEE), Senegal (NAP; JEE; 1540; Rabat, Oct 2017), Sierra Leone (JEE), Togo (1540; Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Improve international shipment through coordination with IATA	
		Secure further funding for specimen referral & transport	
		Officially designate reference labs	
	Laboratory biorisk management	Establish entity to be responsible for national	Gabon (JEE), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017)

Capacity domain	*Macro areas/priorities*	*Needs*	*Country and sources[1]*
	(biosafety & biosecurity)	laboratory biosafety & biosecurity program	
		Develop/strengthen national biosafety & biosecurity awareness raising & training programs, including (as needed) train-the-trainer programs, refresher courses & continuous training	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Côte d'Ivoire (NAP; JEE), DRC (NAP; JEE), Gabon (NAP), Ghana (JEE), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Mauritania (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (JEE), Sierra Leone (Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Develop & disseminate standardized biosafety & biosecurity curricula	
		Strengthen lab biorisk assessment to guide & update regulations, procedures & practices, including for decontamination & management of infectious waste	Cameroon (JEE), DRC (JEE), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017), Sierra Leone (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (JEE)
		Strengthen infectious waste management at all facilities (hospitals, labs, etc.) to minimize safety & security risks	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Mauritania (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017), Sierra Leone (Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Strengthen lab quality management systems based on internationally recognized standards & guidelines	Côte d'Ivoire (JEE), Gabon (JEE), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (JEE; Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Pursue (further) laboratory accreditation	
	Border control/security at ports of entry	Strengthen national detection capabilities (personnel, equipment & training) at border inspection points	Côte d'Ivoire (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017), DRC (NAP; Rabat, Oct 2017), Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (NAP), Sierra Leone (Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (Rabat, Oct 2017)
DETECTION		Conduct biosecurity training for customs & border police to strengthen import/export/trans-shipment control	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (1540; Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Strengthen cooperation between customs & police	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017) Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (1540)
		Strengthen regional cooperation to combat	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (Rabat, Oct

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Capacity domain	*Macro areas/priorities*	*Needs*	*Country and sources*[1]
		trafficking & bio/agroterrorism, including information sharing & reporting	2017), Liberia (JEE), Senegal (1540), Togo (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Establish shared SOPs for ports and ground crossings	Côte d'Ivoire (JEE)
	Disease surveillance, early detection, identification & reporting	Conduct public health awareness campaigns on emerging & re-emerging diseases of natural, accidental or deliberate origin	Côte d'Ivoire (Rabat, Oct 2017), Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Conduct biosecurity awareness raising for security forces, the private sector & others implicated in biothreat prevention & response	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Develop/strengthen (real-time) outbreak & disease (humans & animals) surveillance, including syndromic surveillance	Côte d'Ivoire (Rabat, Oct 2017), Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Formalize & strengthen national/regional laboratory networks, including steps to enhance information exchange	Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Enhance national detection & laboratory identification capabilities	Côte d'Ivoire (JEE), DRC (JEE), Ghana (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (JEE)
	Rapid response to infectious disease outbreaks	Establish national/regional biological emergency response centre	Mauritania (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Establish national/regional biological emergency response team	Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017)
RESPONSE		Train health providers (including training on clinical diagnosis of emerging & re-emerging diseases, reporting & infection control), including in the case of accidental or deliberate release	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Togo (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Provide national veterinary services with adequate equipment, infrastructure & training	Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Strengthen vaccine production capacity	Cameroon (Rabat, Oct 2017)

Capacity domain	*Macro areas/priorities*	*Needs*	*Country and sources*[1]
		(humans & animals)	
	Multi-level & multisectoral communication & coordination	Strengthen One Health approach (human, animal & environmental health), including information/data sharing	Ghana (JEE), Liberia (JEE), Morocco (JEE), Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Strengthen coordination mechanisms & information sharing between public health & security sectors	Mauritania (JEE), Morocco (JEE)
		Reinforce cooperation & improve multisectoral capacity-building amongst national stakeholders (including non-governmental sectors) to ensure rapid response to emerging & re-emerging biological risks & threats	Côte d'Ivoire (NAP), DRC (NAP; JEE), Gabon (NAP), Liberia (JEE), Morocco (NAP), Senegal (NAP)
		Conduct interagency exercises to enhance multisectoral & multidisciplinary coordination & communication mechanisms	DRC (JEE), Gabon (IHR info)
		Develop & test national/regional intersectoral response plans for biological emergencies (natural, accidental, or deliberate in origin)	Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Liberia (Rabat, Oct 2017), Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Establish formal agreements (MOU's, joint protocols, etc.) to improve coordination/collaboration among national/regional stakeholders	Ghana (JEE), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017)
		Strengthen exchange mechanisms between countries in the region (regional approaches)	Côte d'Ivoire (Rabat, Oct 2017), Gabon (Rabat, Oct 2017), Mauritania (Rabat, Oct 2017), Morocco (Rabat, Oct 2017) Senegal (Rabat, Oct 2017)

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